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A·GAGE of·YOVTH

by·Gelett·Burgess

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A GAGE *of* YOUTH

A GAGE *of* YOUTH

LYRICS from The LARK and other POEMS

By GELETT BURGESS
Formerly EDITOR *of The LARK*
AUTHOR *of VIVETTE*
Etc. Etc.

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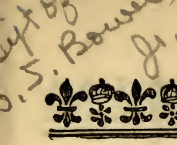

To
F. K. P.

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"Then let them love that list, or live or die,
Me list not die for any lover's doole;
Ne list me leave my lovèd libertie
To pity him that list to play the foole!"

The Faerie Queene.

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The GAGE *of* YOUTH

Youth's in the saddle: hot play for him!
Let them make way for him — Love, and old Time,
and grim Want!
Hark to his vaunt: gaze at the gage he has cast.
Who'll win at last?
God help him, what an array for him!
Tremble and pray for him! Youth cannot die!

Hope gives her favour: he fights for her,
Long days and nights for her, pinning her scarf to
his sleeve;
Sans let or leave, breaking the guard of the foe,
Gallantly, so
Winning the tourney's delights for her:
Jesu, what sights for her! Youth cannot die!

Want keeps the lists: there's a thrust for him,
Hate and distrust for him; Misery, Poverty, Care,
Let them beware! Recreant, foul-hearted traitor,
Youth's strength is greater!
Fiends of the Pit, how you lust for him!
Quick, bite the dust for him! Youth cannot die!

Time tries the joust: shall Youth flee for him,
Armed cap-à-pie for him? Shudder at sight of his
years?
See how he jeers! The duel unequal is pitted,
Youth is quick-witted:
The shock of the charge is rare glee for him:
Time, bend your knee for him! Youth cannot die!

Lightly comes Love: lets a glance at him,
Swift as a lance at him! Memories, passionate,
tender,
Bid him surrender: this is a fight to the death,
No time for breath!
Ah, now Love has lost her last chance at him!
Hope, look askance at him! Youth cannot die!

BALLADE of CONCEIT

To all ye Critics who come to chill
And to smirch the work of the blessed few,
Who feed on the fancy they try to kill,
I snap my fingers — the sapless crew!
What do I care if they bark and mew?
This in the teeth of the mouths that whine:
What have ye wrought ye can say this to:
"By Jove, I made it, and it is mine!"

Never a book that was writ so ill,
Never a picture so false of hue,
Never a song with so little thrill,
That it had not something I 'm glad was true!
What if I fail? I can still pursue
Joy of Creation, the gift divine!
And he who creates has at least this view:
"By Jove, I made it, and it is mine!"

Thank God, who gave me the wits and will,
And the raging passion to put it through,
I never saw task that took so much skill
I dared not try, and I cared not do!
My work is crude, and a bit askew,
You 're free to condemn it, line by line,
But, bred of my brain, in my heart it grew;
"By Jove, I made it, and it is mine!"

ENVOY

Critics, your parasite life renew!
Drink my conceit, for it flows like wine;
Here is my poem, and here is your cue:
"By Jove, I made it, and it is mine!"

BALLADE of the COGNOSCENTI

Out of the silence some one called my name —
Straight to my side a wingèd message flew —
Out of the dark an unknown shadow came,
And lo, we were revealed at last, and knew !
Despite the chance of time and distance, grew
The union, that in mystery began ;
This was the sign, and in its hope we two
Make ready for the Brotherhood of Man.

So soul to soul does boldly kinship claim
For them that know the master-word and clue ;
So secret friendship kindles into flame,
Fired by the spark that smoulders, out of view.
Thus leaps the prophecy the sad world through —
Truth marches ever onward — in her van
The Cognoscenti, leagued with purpose true,
Make ready for the Brotherhood of Man.

Who wove this human web upon the frame
Of the round earth, and its great pattern drew,
To make the fabric of His glorious aim —
He knows the warp and woof and every hue ;
He knows the strands of life, and how pursue,
Appearing, disappearing, by His plan,
The threads that knit the souls illumined, who
Make ready for the Brotherhood of Man.

ENVOY

O Cognoscenti, by your light subdue
The night of Ignorance, and Error's ban !
The Ages' Promise, ye, O blessed Few ;
Make ready for the Brotherhood of Man !

BALLADE of FOG *in the* CAÑON

Banked in a serried drift beside the sea,
Rolling, wind-harried, in a snowy spray,
Majestic and mysterious, swirling free,
The ghostly flood is massing, cold and grey;
Inland it marches, and, at close of day,
Pearl-white and opal, sunset-hued with rose,
It storms the ridge, and then, in brave array,
The fog's dumb army up the cañon goes.

And now the forest whispers, tree to tree —
Their grim defense is marshalled for the fray;
Pine, fir, and redwood, standing cap-à-pie,
Down the long spurs and on the hilltops sway.
And now the misty vanguards, wild and gay,
Ride down the breeze — and now their squadrons close,
And, sweeping like an ocean on its prey,
The fog's dumb army up the cañon goes.

The trembling bushes cower in the lee,
O'er the mad rout the ragged smoke-wreaths play,
And scurrying cloudlets desperately flee.
On the low crests the waving banners stay,
Now lost, now conquering, striving to delay
The riotous deluge — yet in vain oppose —
Height after height is carried, and away
The fog's dumb army up the cañon goes.

ENVOY

All night the battle wages, weird and fey,
And gallant woods dispute their phantom foes;
But, conquering, overwhelming with dismay,
The fog's dumb army up the cañon goes.

BALLADE of the DEVIL-MAY-CARE

FREE as the wandering pike am I,
Many the strings to my amorous bow,
More than a little inclined to fly
Butterfly lovering, to and fro;
Happy wherever the flowers blow,
With the dew on the leaf, and the sunshine above.
Terribly wrong and unprincipled? No,
Life is too short to be "dead in love!"

Not for me is the lover's sigh;
Fools are they, to be worrying so!
Sipping my fill of the honey I fly
Butterfly lovering, to and fro.
I skim the cream, and let all else go;
Gather my roses, and give a shove
Over my shoulder at dutiful woe,—
Life is too short to be "dead in love!"

So, while the fanciful hours go by,
I gayly reap what the simpletons sow.
Fresh with their bloom are the fruits I try,
Butterfly lovering, to and fro.
Then here 's to the lady who wears her beau
On and off, like a dainty glove!
And here 's to the zephyrs that all-ways blow—
Life is too short to be "dead in love!"

ENVOY

Prince, who cares for the coming snow,
Butterfly lovering, to and fro?
Why should a man be a turtle-dove?
Life is too short to be "dead in love!"

BALLADE of DREAMS TRANSPOSED

Some may like to be shut in a cage,
Cooped in a corner, tippling tea,
Some may in troublesome toil engage;
But the luck of a rover 's the life for me!
Over the mountain and over the sea,
Now in the country and now in the town —
And when I 'm wrinkled and withered, maybe,
Then I 'll marry and settle down.

Some may pore over printed page
And never know bird, nor beast, nor tree,
Watching the world from a book or stage;
But the luck of a rover 's the life for me!
So ho! for the forest, and ho! for the lea,
And ho! for the river and prairie brown,
And ho! for a gay long jubilee —
Then I 'll marry and settle down.

Why should I wait till a grey old age
Brings me chance to be rich and free?
I have no money — it makes me rage,
But the luck of a rover 's the life for me!
Though oft, with my lady upon my knee,
(She has frolicsome eyes and a fetching gown)
I fear, if my heart 's to be held in fee,
Then I 'll marry and settle down.

ENVOY

Prince, my sweetheart will not agree —
But the luck of a rover 's the life for me!
She says I must stay, and I fear her frown;
Then I 'll marry and settle down!

RONDEAU: Oh, in my DREAMS I FLEW!

Why not, my Soul? Why not fare forth, and fly
Free as thy dreams were free! — with them to vie;
There thou wert bold — thou knew'st not doubt nor fear,
Thy will was there thy deed — ah, why not here?
Thou need'st but faith to carry thee on high!

A thousand things that others dare not try —
A thousand hopes thy heart doth prophesy;
Thou knowest the master-word, oh, speak it clear!
Why not, my Soul?

Let not this world of little things deny;
Break thy frail bonds, and in those dreams rely!
Trust to the counsels of that other sphere;
Let that night's vision in the day appear;
Walk forth upon the water — wing the sky!
Why not, my Soul?

VIRELAI of the WITCHING SEA

Ho! for the sea at night,
Shining in ghostly light,
  Ho, for the sea!
Billowed, and foam-bedight,
Moonlit, all black and white,
  Wanton is she!
Heaving her bosom bright,
Wicked, and full of might,
  Calling for me!

I am no longer free —
Hark, how she shouts in glee!
  Sirens sang so.
Now, in a sandy lea,
Passionate lovers we —
  Reckless I grow,
And, for the hour, I 'll be
Hers, with my soul in fee,
  While her winds blow!

Tiger-love hers, I know,
Fair friend, and subtle foe.
  Hid out of sight,
Deep in her caverns low,
Lurks her reward of woe.
  Come love, come spite,
Into her waves I go,
Daring her undertow —
  Ho, for the fight!

VILLANELLE of THINGS AMUSING

These are the things that make me laugh ;
Life 's a preposterous farce, say I,
And I 've missed of too many jokes, by half !

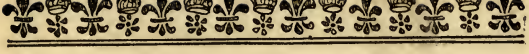
The high-heeled antics of colt and calf,
The men who think they can act and try —
These are the things that make me laugh !

The hard-boiled poses of photograph,
The groom still wearing his wedding tie —
And I 've missed of too many things, by half !

A maid's denial, a lover's chaff,
The rank conceit of the new-born fly —
These are the things that make me laugh !

These are the bubbles I gayly quaff,
Such straws will tickle me till I die,
And I 've missed of too many jokes, by half !

So write me down, in my epitaph,
As one too fond of his health to cry ;
These are the things that make me laugh,
And I 've missed of too many jokes, by half !



VALENTINE for my MOTHER

MOTHERKIN mine, are you fond of me, dear?
Do you really and honestly love me, I pray?
Throw me a kiss, for St. Valentine's here!

Are you sorry I'm so far away from you here?
Do you miss me a little, on Valentine's day?
Motherkin mine, are you fond of me, dear?

Though it come with a smile or it come with a tear,
I'll know what you mean (though you'll try to be gay),
Throw me a kiss, for St. Valentine's here!

Ah, *that* one has reached me, so be of good cheer —
(There's another for you, that is now on the way)
Motherkin mine, are you fond of me, dear?

Ah, Motherkin, though you're a woman, 't is clear
There's one thing that you *can* throw straight, I must say!
Throw me a kiss, for St. Valentine's here!

Oh, all of the girls will be jealous, I fear —
I'll none of their kisses, with you I would play!
Motherkin mine, are you fond of me, dear?
Throw me a kiss, for St. Valentine's here!

EPITHALAMIUM : in a SURREY GARDEN

The day still dozes on, and in the shade
The bushes nod in silence, half asleep.
Across the lawn the housewife shadows creep,
Till now, at last, the evening bed is made.
The sunflower droops, the yellow daisies fade,
The winds, with gentle harpings low and deep,
The quivering branches of the plane trees sweep ;
The birds, besought to silence, have obeyed.

Now looks the Moon across the dotted sky
To find this quiet Garden, dark and fair,
Lying, a bridal maiden, in the night ;
The bright-faced lover sees her from on high,
And down he drops a silvery ladder there,
Descends, and fills her waiting heart with light!

SONNET: On CHRISTMAS *in* TOWN

This is the magic month of all the year,
Holding the children's golden precious day
Of which, with eager eyes, we hear them say,
"In three weeks, two weeks, *one week*, 't will be here!"
The sparkling windows of the shops appear
In fascinating, wonder-bright array,
With holly and with greens the streets are gay,
The bustling town begins its Christmas cheer.

Now, secret plots are whispered in the hall,
Mysterious parcels to the door are brought,
And busy hands are half-done gifts concealing.
The Eve is here, with lighted tree and all!
And Santa Claus, with merry marvels fraught
Before the dawn, across the roof comes stealing!

TRIOLET for GRACE'S BIRTH-DAY

November Fifteen,
I know why you 're merry !
You know what I mean,
November Fifteen,
When you come on the scene
So jubilant, very,
November Fifteen —
I know why you 're merry !

The MERRY MIDNIGHT

When I go to bed at night,
Easy rests my tired head ;
Everything seems good and right —
Daytime worries all are fled.

Easy rests my tired head
In the dark and silent room ;
Daytime worries all are fled,
Joy is hidden in the gloom.

In the dark and silent room
Debonair romances wake ;
Joy is hidden in the gloom,
Foolish fancies revel make.

Debonair romances wake,
Bashful thoughts come out to play,
Foolish fancies revel make,
Daring hopes take holiday.

Bashful thoughts come out to play
When I go to bed at night ;
Daring hopes take holiday —
Everything seems good and right !

RONDEL of PERFECT FRIENDSHIP

Friend of my soul, forever true,
What do we care for flying years,
Unburdened all by doubts or fears,
Trusting what naught can e'er subdue ?

Fate leads ! Her path is out of view ;
Nor time nor distance interferes !
Friend of my soul, forever true,
What do we care for flying years ?

For, planted when the world was new,
In other lives, in other spheres,
Our love to-day a bud appears —
Not yet the blossom's perfect hue,
Friend of my soul, forever true !

A DAUGHTER *of the* NORTH

Who wins my hand must do these three things well:
Skate fast as Winter wind across the glare;
Swim through the fiord, past breaker, rip and swell;
Ride like the Storm Fiend on my snow-white mare!

Shall a maid do what Viking may not dare?
I wed no lover I can aught excel—
Skate, swim, and ride with me, and I declare,
Who wins my hand must do these three things well!

Bind on your skates, and after me pell-mell;
Follow me, carles, and catch my streaming hair!
(Keep the black ice,—O Bolstrom, if you fell!)
Skate fast as Winter wind across the glare!

Thrice have I swum from this grey cliff to where,
On the far side, the angry surges yell;
Into the surf! (O Bolstrom, have a care!)
Swim through the fiord, past breaker, rip and swell!

Bring out my Frieda, none but I can quell;
(Watch her eye, Bolstrom, when you mount—beware!)
Ride bareback now and find the master-spell;
Ride like the Storm Fiend on my snow-white mare!

Skohl! Vikings, Skohl! Am I not bold and fair?
Who would not barter Heaven, and venture Hell,
Striving the flower of my love to wear?
(Mind my words, Bolstrom, hark to what I tell!)
Who wins my hand?

CHANT-ROYAL of the TRUE ROMANCE

ROMANCE is dead, say some, and so, to-day,
Honour and Chivalry are faint and cold;
And now, Adventure has no modern way
To stir the blood, as in the days of old.
They mourn the times of Gallantry as done,
Knighthood has seen the setting of its sun,
And fairy, nymph and genie, grown too shy,
No more, in these new lands, hold revel high;
There lives no mystery, now, and they cry woe
To this old world, so twisted and awry!
Romance is dead, say some; but I say No!

Haroun-al-Raschid, so the sceptics say,
Would seek in vain for sights his book has told —
Crusoe could find no island far away
Enough, his life with glamour to enfold —
Ulysses now might rove, nor fear to run
The risk of perils Homer's fable spun —
And Hiawatha's white canoe would try
In vain to find some beach, whence to descry
The hunting-grounds where once he bent his bow.
Gone are the Halcyon Days, they sadly sigh;
Romance is dead, say some; but I say No!

Not while the ancient sea casts up its spray
Upon the laughing beach, and I behold
The myriad dancing ripples of the bay
Speed out to meet the sunset's robe of gold;
Not till the last ship's voyage has begun;
Not till the storm god's lightnings cease to stun!
Not till the mountains lift no more to sky
Their secret fastnesses, and forests vie
No more with winds and mists, with sun and snow,
And rustling fields no more to streams reply!
Romance is dead, say some; but I say No!

Not while the Night maintains her mystic sway,
  And conjures, in the haunted wood and wold,
Her eerie shadows, fanciful and fey,
  With priests of Darkness, pale and sombre-stoled ;
Not while upon the Sea of Dreams are won
Strange ventures, escapades, and frolic fun ;
Where tricksy phantoms, whimsically sly,
Order your deeds, you know not how nor why ;
  Where Reason, Wit, and Conscience drunken go.
Have you e'er dreamed, and still can question ? Fie !
  Romance is dead, say some ; but I say No !

Not while Youth lives and Springtime bids be gay !
  Not while love blooms, and lovers dare be bold !
Not while a poet sings his roundelay,
  Or men by maiden's kisses are cajoled !
You have not seen her, or you, too, would shun
The thought that in this world Romance there's none ;
For oh, my Love has power to beautify
My whole life long, and all its charm supply ;
  My bliss, my youth, my dreams, to her I owe !
And so, ye scornful cynics, I deny ;
  Romance is dead, say some ; but I say No !

ENVOY

God, keep my youth and love alive, that I
May wonder at this world until I die !
  Let sea and mountain speak to me, that so,
Waking or sleeping, I may fight the lie ;
  Romance is dead, say some ; but I say No !

CHANT-ROYAL of CALIFORNIA

Onward the Nation marches, and in sight
Of this far Western sea, whose ripples glow
Wide towards the sunset, with its staff does smite
The rock of Hope, that golden streams may flow.
This is our Promised Land, beyond compare
The most prolific Eden, rich and fair!
Here may we lay our hearth-stones, and with glee
Of new possession, and with song, may we
Set out the grape and fig, and seed-corn strew.
Ah, gallant husbandmen, what soil have ye!
This vintage shall the old world's youth renew!

O maiden West! What need to re-indite
Her beauties and her blessings — all men know!
The day rings with her laughter of delight,
All of earth's good she has, without the woe.
The joy of youth is hers — a future rare
Is hers to win, to foster and to share;
Strong, reckless, frank and jubilant is she,
Holding with thoughtless hand her fortune's key;
Yet, underneath her sun and heavens blue
The vine shall yield, and it shall come to be
This vintage shall the old world's youth renew!

Bring no old myths to exercise their might
O'er her grey mountains' grim defending row;
Let the past heroes linger in the night,
Nor haunt her meadows, where wild flowers blow!
False gods are all behind; ah, leave them there —
Let the new race dare breathe her fresher air!
Tribe after tribe has lived, and left her free;
Aztec and Indian hailed Yosemite,
Shasta and Tamalpais — the Spaniard, too,
Passed with the Russ; but 't was her fate's decree
This vintage shall the old world's youth renew!

Then may we garner nothing but the Right
The seeds of Error may we never sow !
The soil is virgin and the sunshine bright,
The glad warm rains shall teach the bud to grow.
Strike deep the furrow straight with forthright care
And gather all the lavish Seasons bear ;
Then shall a Nation rise, of such degree
As never Argonaut dared hope to see !
A thousand harvests shall not half subdue
The power of this land's abundant fee ;
This vintage shall the old world's youth renew !

High as her hills shall be her honour's height,
Deep as her gorges loyalty shall go ;
Broad as her plains, or as her eagle's flight
Shall be the Freedom she shall then bestow.
This is our field ; so gird ye, and be yare
To conquer and to hold, to brave and dare
The perils of her wealth — nor bow the knee
To the dead laws, nor from live truths to flee !
Thus, only, must we fare the long years through,
If the land fatten — and be this our plea :
This vintage shall the old world's youth renew !

ENVOY

O Pioneer, what task is set for thee !
Not thine to taste the fruit, but plant the tree ;
The years of strife are thine ; if thou art true,
Thy sons' sons shall enjoy the Jubilee ;
This vintage shall the old world's youth renew !

SESTINA of YOUTH *and* AGE

My father died when I was all too young,
And he too old, too crowded with his care,
For me to know he knew my hot fierce hopes;
Youth sees wide chasms between itself and Age —
How could I think he, too, had lived my life?
My dreams were all of war, and his of rest.

And so he sleeps (please God), at last at rest,
And, it may be, with soul refreshed, more young
Than when he left me, for that other life —
Free, for a while, at least, from that old Care,
The hard, relentless torturer of his age,
That cooled his youth, and bridled all his hopes.

For now I know he had the longing hopes,
The wild desires of youth, and all the rest
Of my ambitions, ere he came to age;
He, too, was bold, when he was free and young —
Had I but known that he could feel, and care!
How could I know the secret of his life?

In my own youth I see his early life
So reckless, and so full of flaming hopes —
I see him jubilant, without a care,
The days too short, and grudging time for rest;
He knew the wild delight of being young —
Shall I, too, know the calmer joys of age?

His words come back, to mind me of that age
When, lovingly, he watched my broadening life —
And, dreaming of the days when he was young,
Smiled at my joys, and shared my fears and hopes.
His words still live, for in my heart they rest,
Too few not to be kept with jealous care!

Ah, little did I know how he could care !
That, in my youth, lay joys to comfort age !
Not in this world, for him, was granted rest,
But as he lived, in me, a happier life,
He prayed more earnestly to win my hopes
Than ever for his own, when he was young !

ENVOY

He once was young ; I too must fight with Care ;
He knew my hopes, and I must share his age ;
God grant my life be worthy, too, of rest !

NEUVAIN for APRIL

I HAD forgotten all about the Spring,
For Winter seemed not rude, when, in the rain,
I heard the meadow lark, mad-mannered, sing!

The fields so long in sober garb had lain,
I had forgotten all about the Spring,
When April came and piped a nimble strain!

She set the orchard gayly blossoming;
Her laughter woke the slumbering fields again;
I had forgotten all about the Spring!

HELEN'S FACE *a* BOOK

HELEN's face is like a book —
  Charming, all its pages.
Helen's face is like a book ;
What 's the story I forsook,
When on Helen's face I look,
  When her smile engages ?

There, I read an old romance ;
  Here, I see one living !
There, I read an old romance,
But in Helen's lightest glance
Far a livelier tale enchants,
  Wild excitement giving !

What is printer's ink to me ?
  Commas, dots and dashes !
What is printer's ink to me,
If with Helen I may be,
Exclamation points to see
  Underneath her lashes ?

KARMA

Into his eyes there flashed a fire;
Out of his scabbard leaped his blade —
Three strides across the room he made —
His heart beat hot with fierce desire.

Cold is the wreck his steel has wrought,
While living horror takes its stead;
Have all these years of calmness sped
To miss at last the prize he sought?

* * * * *

Oh, blossom of that long-past life!
Oh, venom of forgotten sin!
So nearly won! Again begin
The long, long round of weary strife!

The ISLE *of* IDLENESS

I WATCH the ships that on the sea
Are sailing, far away from me,
While I, in desolate distress
Lie on the Isle of Idleness.

They come and go, too far away
For me to signal. I must stay
Alone in sorrowful duresse
Upon the Isle of Idleness.

The radiant sirens smile no more
That lured me to this barren shore,
And I must perish soon, unless
I leave this Isle of Idleness.

So, be it Love or be it Hate
Or be it Joy or Pain, I wait
The first that comes, with eagerness
To leave this Isle of Idleness !

Upon HELEN'S FOOLISHNESS *not to be* CAST DOWN *by* MISFORTUNE

HELEN says, "Oh, let 's be gay,
Spite of threatened sorrow!"
Helen makes a smile, to-day,
Slay a tear to-morrow.
Helen says, "A laugh is best!"
Sips the foam, and spills the rest!

Helen is a foolish maid —
Though her road is hilly,
Helen never is dismayed;
Foolish — yes, and silly
Spite of all that I can do —
Helen, make me foolish, too!

The DEBATABLE GROUND

CANNOT draw a map of Love, and show
The ins and outs of all that boundary line
Where Friendship ends and Love begins; ah, no!
The art 's not mine.

For there no lofty mountain range divides,
No moated wall or separating doors;
No river flows between, whose opposite sides
Are foreign shores.

I do not know, if, wandering rashly out
Into that charmèd, dangerous frontier,
I may have crossed Love's outposts, there, without
A touch of fear.

* * * * *

Some day, perhaps, you 'll push the chase too far
Within those hills, O mad and reckless youth,
And see the enemy surround you! Ah,
What then, forsooth?

The BUTTERFLY'S *MADRIGAL*

Love-for-a-Day, come let 's be gay !
Love, for a day, thy lips are smiling !
Love-for-a-Week, our bliss we 'll seek,
Love, for a week, dull care beguiling !
Love-for-a-Year, be true my dear !
Love, for a year — and then we 'll sever ;
Love for a day or year we may,
But Love for aye — ah, never !

'T WAS *ever a* MAN *and a* MAID

'T was ever a man and a maid, my son —
'T was ever a man and a maid;
And 't will be that way till the Judgment Day,
And after it, too, I 'm afraid!

'T was ever a man and a maid, my son,
Of a Sunday afternoon,
With a stroll in the Park, and a kiss in the dark
Of a sultry Summer moon.

'T was ever a man and a maid, my son;
As you watch the crowds go by,
Of the folk that pass, there 's a youth and a lass
Wherever you pipe your eye!

'T was ever a man and a maid, my son,
All over the world it goes,
And the man from Mars may shy at the cars,
But here is a game he knows!

'T was ever a man and a maid, my son,
There is Work, and there 's maids to woo —
And they 're quite two things, as I know, who sings
And they 've bowled down better than you!

'T was ever a man and a maid, my son,
Watch out, or She 'll let you shirk!
For a man can't write, in the candle light,
If Her eyes get into his work!

SONG for SYLVIA'S LIPS

THE bees to Sylvia's lips have flown,
For honey sweet they go;
The flowerets all have jealous grown
To be neglected so!

But Sylvia has reproved the bees,
And sent them back again —
The flowers are sweet enough for these;
Her lips were made for men!

I DARE *not* TELL *how* FAIR THOU ART

I DARE not tell how fair thou art,
And all thy charm and grace;
Thy mirror can but show thee part —
It only gives thy face,
Sweetheart!

I dare not tell how fair thou art,
Lest, knowing, thou shouldst fear
'T was but thy beauty won my heart;
It was not so, my dear
Sweetheart!

I dare not tell how fair thou art;
Thy soul is fairer, far,—
My love hath not the subtle art
To paint that radiant star,
Sweetheart!

Yet though my lips shall not impart,
Mine eyes will tell thee true —
I dare not tell how fair thou art,
For I should fear to woo,
Sweetheart!

BRAVADO

Let not the world so school me,
Sandpaper me and tool me,
That I shall lose the will to say,
When women fondly fool me, —

"'T was I that did the choosing,
The taking and refusing;
I'll go to Hell and count it well;
The game was worth the losing!"

"*A* BOY'S WILL *is the* WIND'S WILL *and the* THOUGHTS *of* YOUTH *are* LONG, LONG THOUGHTS"

Would I could drive the Chariot of the Day
In one triumphant charge from star to star —
Flash the white radiance of the Dawn afar,
And wake this sleeping Earth from Death's decay!

I know not what I would that I could do;
I hear a voice I cannot understand;
My brain is empty, while my willing hand
Chafes at delay — ah, would to God I knew!

The thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts, and wild;
Between the upper and the nether stone
Must I be ground, until my soul has grown
Sick of the "wind's will," and become His child?

His, curbed and tempered to a calmer strain,
Filled with a deeper power than I had dreamed—
Must I forget those hungry hopes, that seemed,
Mid storm and stress, to heed nor joy nor pain?

God's will be done! If God be over all,
He knows my young ambition's sacrifice —
Yet, though His high displeasure be the price,
Once more I dare defy His will, and call,

"*Would I could drive the Chariot of the Day*
In one triumphant charge from star to star—
Flash the white radiance of the Dawn afar,
And wake this sleeping Earth from Death's decay!"

YOUTH'S LEGACY

Not that we shun the darkness or the rain,
Not that we fear the hazard of the cold,
Not that we shrink from sorrow or from pain,
Or dread the bitterness of growing old;

But while Spring flowers, and while the skies are blue,
We hoard Life's gladness for a heritage,
That Winter's sunshine may the Spring renew,
And all Youth's pleasures live to dower Age!

CHILDHOOD

Fair as a star, rare as a star,
  The joys of the future lie
To the eyes of a child, to the sighs of a child,
  Heavenly far and high !

Fair as a dream, rare as a dream,
  The hopes of a future sure
To the wondering child, to the blundering child,
  Trusting, and free, and pure !

Fair is the soul, rare is the soul
  Who has kept, after youth is past,
All the art of the child, all the heart of the child,
  Holding his faith at last !

The GAME *of* LIFE

Let 's judge a man, not by his tools, but toys,
And count him happy, when his work employs
The playthings that his secret hour enjoys.

Then, though he sport with Money, or with Name,
With Sword and Map, or with a Pen and Fame,
What does it matter, if he plays the Game ?

The THIRD DEGREE

If the Master cares to judge me by the things that I have done,
There will be no place in Heaven for His foolish, erring son ;
If the Master 's seen the things that I have wanted most to do,
There 'll be no Salvation for me, for the Devil knows 'em too !
But I 've *wanted* true to want to do the things I knew were right —
Say, can it be the likes of me 'll have virtue in His sight ?

I have soiled my hands with mischief, and I 've wanted to do more,
And 't was but because I did n't dare, it was n't done before ;
But behind the dirty deed I did, behind the wish I had,
There 's been a longing to be straight, a feeling I was bad ;
Though He alone has seen and known beyond that double sin —
He knows my soul is somehow whole — say, will He let me in ?

If there 's any place beside the Gate to live a life or so,
I 'd like to try it all again, before I 'm sent below ;
I 'd like to try to *want* to do what 's right, and then, maybe,
I 'd get to *try* to do it, and at last I might be free!
For a full-grown saint I know I ain't, and there 's plenty more as bad,
But give us time and I know we 'll climb and make His Heaven glad !

VIVE *la* BAGATELLE!

Sing a song of foolishness, laughing-stocks and cranks !
The more there are the merrier ; come and join the ranks !
Life is dry and stupid ; whoop her up a bit !
Donkeys live in clover ; bray and throw a fit !

Take yourself in earnest, never stop to think,
Strut and swagger boldly, dress in red-and-pink,
Prate of stuff and nonsense, get yourself abused ;
Someone 's got to play the fool to keep the crowd amused !

Bully for the idiot ! Bully for the guy !
You could be a prig yourself, if you would only try !
Altruistic asses keep the fun alive ;
Clowns are growing scarcer ; hurry and arrive !

I seen a crazy critic a-writin' of a screed :
" Tendencies " and " Unities " — Maeterlinck indeed !
He wore a paper collar, and his tie was up behind ;
If that 's the test of Culture, then I 'm glad I 'm not refined !

Let me laugh at you, then you can laugh at me ;
Then we 'll josh together everything we see ;
Everyone 's a nincumpoop to another's view ;
Laughter makes the sun shine ! ROOP-de-doodle-doo !

ENTHUSIASM

Child of the burning heart,
  Child of the blossoming soul,
O Song of Life and Art,
  God keep you brave and whole !

Failing, — still feel the fire ;
  Winning, — still keep the dew ;
Striving, — still hear the lyre ;
  This be my prayer for you !

The FOUR ELEMENTS

Fire o' the Blood, that was lit by a kiss,
Wine o' the Brain, that has drugged me with bliss,
Wind o' the Soul, that has blown me so far,
Dust o' the Body, that glows like a star.

Love, in your Alchemy bravely I trust,
For the Wine quenches Fire, and the Wind scatters
Dust !
Take me and make me ! For when you inspire,
The Wine quickens Dust, and the Wind fans the
Fire !

The PROTEST *of the* ILLITERATE

I SEEN a dunce of a poet once, a-writin' a little book;
And he says to me with a smile, says he, "Here 's a pome — d' you want to look?"
And I threw me eye at the pome; says I, "What 's the use o' this here rot?"
"It 's a double sestine," says he, lookin' mean, "and they 're hard as the deuce, that 's what!"

"There 's blood in your ink-well — I don't think!" says I, beginnin' to preach;
"Oh, there aint much force," he says, "'o course! but there 's plenty of figgers o' speech!"
"Why write about maids and violet shades?" says I. "Wot 's the matter with MEN?"
"That fad 's played out," he says with a pout, "and BEAUTY 's come in again!"

"Did ever you go out into the snow?" I says, "or feel like a fight?
Did you read in your books how the sunrise looks, or did you learn o' the night?
Your bloomin' 'flowers' they rhyme with 'bowers,' but they smell o' the hot-house blend.
Wot 's love and kisses and such-like blisses? Good God! had ye never a FRIEND?

"There 's more than enough that can write the stuff that the women like to read;
They 'll mark a line that they think is fine, if *that* is the praise you need!
But show me a verse that 's a blame sight worse, if it has but an honest look,
And the pages are worn and thumbed and torn — I 'll believe you 've written a BOOK!"

WILLY *and the* LADY

LEAVE the lady, Willy, let the racket rip,
She is going to fool you, you have lost your grip,
Your brain is in a muddle and your heart is in a whirl,
Come along with me, Willy, never mind the girl!

Come and have a Man-Talk,
Come with those who *can* talk,
Light your pipe and listen, and the boys will see you through;
Love is only chatter,
Friends are all that matter,
Come and talk the Man-Talk, that's the cure for you!

Leave the lady, Willy, let her letter wait,
You 'll forget your troubles when you get it straight,
The world is full of women, and the women full of wile;
Come along with me, Willy, we can make you smile!

Come and have a Man-Talk,
A rousing black-and-tan talk,
There are plenty there to teach you, there's a lot for you to do;
Your head must stop its whirling
Before you go a-girling,
Come and talk the Man-Talk, that's the cure for you!

Leave the lady, Willy, the night is good and long,
Time for beer and 'baccy, time to have a song;
Where the smoke is swirling, sorrow if you can —
Come along with me, Willy, come and be a man!

Come and have a Man-Talk,
Come and hear the clan talk,
We 've all of us been there before, and jolly glad it 's through !
We 'll advise you confidently,
And we 'll break it to you gently,
Come and talk the Man-Talk, that 's the cure for you !

Leave the lady, Willy, you are rather young ;
When the tales are over, when the songs are sung,
When the men have made you, try the girl again ;
Come along with me, Willy, you 'll be better then !

Come and have a Man-Talk,
Forget your girl-divan talk,
You 've got to get acquainted with another point of view !
Girls will only fool you,
We 're the ones to school you,
Come and talk the Man-Talk, that 's the cure for you !

BALLAD of the HYDE STREET GRIP

A San Francisco Rhapsody

Oh, the rain is slanting sharply, and the Norther's blowing cold,
When the cable strands are loosened, she is nasty hard to hold;
There's little time for sitting down and little time for gab,
For the bumper guards the crossing, and you'd best be keeping tab!
Two-and-twenty "let-go's" every double trip —
It takes a bit of doing, on the Hyde Street Grip!

Throw her off at Powell Street, let her go at Post,
Watch her well at Geary and at Sutter, when you coast,
Easy at the Power House, have a care at Clay,
Sacramento, Washington, Jackson, all the way!
Drop the rope at Union, never make a slip —
The lever keeps you busy, on the Hyde Street Grip!

Foot-brake, wheel-brake, slot-brake and gong,
You've got to keep 'em working, or you'll soon be going wrong!
Rush her on the crossing, catch her on the rise,
Easy round the corners, when the dust is in your eyes!
And the bell will always stop you, if you hit her up a clip —
You are apt to earn your wages, on the Hyde Street Grip!

North Beach to Tenderloin, over Russian Hill,
The grades are something giddy, and the curves are fit to kill !
All the way to Market Street, climbing up the slope,
Down upon the other side, hanging to the rope ;
But the sight of San Francisco, as you take the lurching dip !
There is plenty of excitement, on the Hyde Street Grip !

Oh, the lights are in the Mission, and the ships are in the Bay ;
And Tamalpais is looming from the Gate, across the way ;
The Presidio trees are waving, and the hills are growing brown,
And the driving fog is harried from the Ocean to the town !
How the pulleys slap and rattle ! How the cables hum and whip !
Oh, they sing a gallant chorus, on the Hyde Street Grip !

When the Orpheum is closing, and the crowd is on the way,
The conductor's punch is ringing, and the dummy 's light and gay ;
But the wait upon the table by the Beach is dark and still —
Just the swashing of the surges on the shore below the mill ;
And the flash of Angel Island breaks across the channel rip,
As the hush of midnight falls upon the Hyde Street Grip !

The LAST DEGREE

We parted, and we cried, "Success!"
What did it mean? We did not know.
There was the Course we could not guess
In Life's Curriculum, unless
What we had learned might show.

What had we learned? To act like men,
To love and fight, to laugh and sweat!
Ah, there were other lessons then,
Besides pure Science, in our ken,
We learned to live! And yet,

When the Terms close for you and me,
And Life's Examinations end,
One Question only shall there be
Before we take our last Degree:—
What does it mean—"a *Friend*"?

SONG for the RENAISSANCE

HERE 's to the Cause, and the blood that feeds it !
Here 's to the Cause, and the soul that speeds it !
Coward or hero or bigot or sage,
All shall take part in the war that we wage ;
And though 'neath our banners range contrary manners,
Shall we pick, shall we choose, 'twixt the false and the true ?
Not for us to deny them ! Let the Cause take and try them !
The one man for us is the man that shall do !

Here 's to the Cause, let who will get the glory !
Here 's to the Cause, and a fig for the story !
The braggarts may tell it, who serve but for fame;
There 'll be more than enough that will die for the Name !
And though, in some eddy, our vessels unsteady
Be stranded and wrecked, ere the victory 's won,
Let the current sweep by us ! O Death, come and try us !
What if laggards win praise, if the Cause shall go on ?

Here 's to the Cause, and the years that have passed !
Here 's to the Cause — it will triumph at last !
The end shall illumine the hearts that have braved
All the years and the fears, that the Cause might be saved.
And though what we hoped for, and darkly have groped for,
Come not in the manner we prayed that it should,
We shall gladly confess it, and the Cause, may God bless it,
Shall find us all worthy, who did what we could !

OVER the HILLS *with* NANCY

She has tightened her cinch by another inch,
  She has shortened her stirrup strap,
She is off with a whirl of horse and girl,
  And I am a lucky chap!

With a "Catch if you can! I'm as good as a man!"
  At a breakneck pace we ride;
I have all but placed my arm round her waist,
  As we gallop side by side,

When, "*Roop Ki-yi!!*" and her elbows high,
  She spurts in the cow-boy style;
With a jerk and a saw at her horse's jaw,
  She's ahead for another mile.

And it's Nancy's dust that breathe I must,
  And it's Nancy's trail I follow,
Till I leave the rut for a steep short cut,
  And I've caught her, down in the hollow!

Then into the creek, with a splash and a shriek,
  To her saddle girth she dares;
"Oh, make for the shoal, or he'll stop and roll!"
  But it's little that Nancy cares!

All up the hill she's ahead of me still,
  And over the ridge we go,
And my steaming nag has begun to lag,
  But it is n't my fault, I know!

Oh, fair astride does Nancy ride,
And her spur she uses free,
And it 's little she cares for the gown she wears,
And it 's little she cares for me !

But the strawberry roan with the sharp backbone
That Nancy rode that day,
He does n't forget that Saturday yet,
When Nancy led the way !

BALLAD of the THREE LOVERS

It was Christmas Eve; in the castle hall
The Yule log burned with a merry flare,
Holly and mistletoe decked the wall,
Waxen candles gleamed everywhere.

The Lady Alys was fair and gay,
She bided a trial that she had planned;
She had sworn to answer, on Christmas Day,
Which of her lovers should have her hand.

The Lady Alys had lovers three:
Pale St. Denys, with scholard air,
Wild Lord Dammit, a coxcomb, he,
And young Sir Guy de la Tour Bellaire.

The Lady Alys was loth to choose;
Raoul St. Denys was clerkly wise,
Yet who could the rich Lord Dammit refuse?
But, oh, Sir Guy, with the hazel eyes!

The Lady Alys she sate apart
Under the antlers, mistletoe-decked;
She waited and watched with a beating heart—
Which of her lovers did she expect?

So entered St. Denys, and found her there;
He dropped him down on his silken knee;
It was, "O my Lady, but thou art fair!"
It was, "Oh, I would die for the love of thee!"

But the Lady Alys, she sent him back,
And she smiled at the mistletoe, answering,
"Nay!"
Of laggard lovers she had no lack,
Her heart must be won in another way!

Lord Dammit, he entered his luck to try,
  She sate demure, and she did not stir ;
He boldly kissed her, ere she could fly,
  He swore he lived but for love of her !

But the Lady Alys did him refuse,
  For there was another to come, she knew,
One more lover to pick and choose —
  What if he bungled his courtship, too !

She waited Sir Guy de la Tour Bellaire,
  Nor waited long, for he came and cried,
" O Alys, come out of your corner there,
  For your mistletoe-kiss I cannot abide !

" If I kiss you not of your own free will,
  If my heart win not, maugre let or leave,
What do I care for your kisses chill —
  The licensed kisses of Christmas Eve ! "

Then the Lady Alys she left her place,
  And she folded her fingers his neck around ;
She lifted her lips to his gallant face —
  The Lady Alys her love had found !

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